
Unit 7: Transfer of Command

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, the students should be able to:

- Describe the process of transfer of command.
- List the essential elements of information involved in transfer of command.

Scope

- Unit Introduction
- Unit Objectives
- Transfer of Command Overview
- Transfer of Command Procedures
- Transfer of Command Briefing
- Activity
- Summary

Methodology

This unit uses a combination of instructor presentations and discussion questions. The content begins by defining transfer of command and identifying when it may take place. Next, the unit reviews transfer of command procedures. A suggested agenda for a transfer of command briefing is then presented. The final activity allows the students to identify potential challenges encountered when command is transferred and to describe the strategies for addressing these challenges.

Time Plan

A suggested time plan for this unit is shown below. More or less time may be required, based on the experience level of the group.

Topic	Time
Unit Introduction Unit Objectives Transfer of Command Overview	5 minutes
Transfer of Command Procedures	5 minutes
Transfer of Command Briefing	5 minutes
Activity: Challenges and Strategies	40 minutes
Summary	5 minutes
Total	1 hour

**Visual 7.1**

Unit 7: Transfer of Command



Visual Description: Unit Introduction

Instructor Notes

Tell the participants that the purpose of this unit is to review the process used when transferring command.



Visual 7.2

Unit Objectives

- Describe the process of transfer of command.
- List the essential elements of information involved in transfer of command.

Unit 7:
Transfer of Command

Visual 7.2

Visual Description: Unit Objectives

Instructor Notes

Review the unit objectives with the class. Tell the participants that by the end of this unit, they should be able to:

- Describe the process of transfer of command.
- List the essential elements of information involved in transfer of command.
 - Situation status.
 - Incident objectives and priorities based on the IAP.
 - Current organization.
 - Resource assignments.
 - Resources ordered and en route.
 - Incident facilities.
 - Incident communications plan.
 - Incident prognosis, concerns, and other issues.
 - Introduction of Command and General Staff members.



Visual 7.3

Transfer of Command

Transfer of command is . . .

. . . the process of moving the responsibility for incident command from one Incident Commander to another.



Unit 7:
Transfer of Command

Visual 7.3

Visual Description: Transfer of Command

Instructor Notes

Explain that the process of moving the responsibility for incident command from one Incident Commander to another is called “**transfer of command**.”



Visual 7.4

When Command Is Transferred

May take place when:

- A jurisdiction or agency is legally required to take command.
- Change of command is necessary for effectiveness or efficiency.
- Incident complexity changes.
- There is a need to relieve personnel on incidents of extended duration.
- Personal emergencies (e.g., Incident Commander has a family emergency).
- Agency administrator/official directs a change in command.

Unit 7:
Transfer of Command

Visual 7.4

Visual Description: When Command Is Transferred

Instructor Notes

Explain that transfer of command may take place for many reasons, including:

- A jurisdiction or agency is legally required to take command.
- Change of command is necessary for effectiveness or efficiency.
- Incident complexity changes.
- There is a need to relieve personnel on incidents of extended duration.
- Personal emergencies (e.g., Incident Commander has a family emergency).
- Agency administrator/official directs a change in command.

Ask the participants if they can think of other reasons why command might be transferred.



Visual 7.5

A More Qualified Person Arrives

The arrival of a more qualified person does **NOT** necessarily mean a change in incident command. The more qualified individual may:

- Assume command according to agency guidelines.
- Maintain command as it is and monitor command activity and effectiveness.
- Request a more qualified Incident Commander from the agency with a higher level of jurisdictional responsibility.



Unit 7:
Transfer of Command

Visual 7.5

Visual Description: A More Qualified Person Arrives

Instructor Notes

Present the following key points:

- The arrival of a more qualified person does **NOT** necessarily mean a change in incident command.
- Upon arrival, a more qualified individual may:
 - Assume command according to agency guidelines.
 - Maintain command as it is and monitor command activity and effectiveness.
 - Request a more qualified Incident Commander from the agency with a higher level of jurisdictional responsibility.



Visual 7.6

Transfer of Command Procedures

Whenever possible, transfer of command should:

- Take place face-to-face.
- Include a complete briefing.

The effective time and date of the transfer should be communicated to personnel.



Unit 7:
Transfer of Command

Visual 7.6

Visual Description: Transfer of Command Procedures

Instructor Notes

Explain that one of the main features of ICS is a procedure to transfer command with minimal disruption to the incident. This procedure may be used any time personnel in supervisory positions change.

Emphasize that the following three key procedures should be followed whenever possible:

- The transfer should take place face-to-face.
- The transfer should include a complete briefing.
- The effective time and date of the transfer should be communicated to all personnel who need to know, both at the scene and elsewhere.



Visual 7.7

Transfer of Command Briefing Elements

The transfer of command briefing should include:

- Situation status.
- Incident objectives and priorities based on the IAP.
- Current organization.
- Resource assignments.
- Resources ordered and en route.
- Incident facilities.
- Incident communications plan.
- Incident prognosis, concerns, and other issues.
- Introduction of Command and General Staff members.



Unit 7:
Transfer of Command

Visual 7.7

Visual Description: Transfer of Command Briefing Elements

Instructor Notes

Tell the participants that a transfer of command briefing should always take place. The briefing should include the following essential elements of information:

- Situation status.
- Incident objectives and priorities based on the IAP.
- Current organization.
- Resource assignments.
- Resources ordered and en route.
- Incident facilities.
- Incident communications plan.
- Incident prognosis, concerns, and other issues.
- Introduction of Command and General Staff members.



Visual 7.8

Documentation: ICS Form 201



- The initial Incident Commander can use the ICS 201 to document actions and situational information required for transfer of command.
- For more complex transfer of command situations, every aspect of the incident must be documented and included in the transfer of command briefing.

Unit 7:
Transfer of Command

Visual 7.8

Visual Description: Documentation: ICS Form 201

Instructor Notes

Emphasize that agency policies and incident-specific issues may alter the transfer of command process. In all cases, the information shared must be documented and saved for easy retrieval during and after the incident.

Present the following key points:

- One useful tool for document change of command is ICS Form 201, the Incident Briefing. The primary intent is for this document to be used by the initial Incident Commander to document actions and situational information quickly while staff is limited and the incident is dynamic. The form can be used to document items for the transfer of command briefing.
- **For more complex transfer of command situations, every aspect of the incident must be documented and included in the transfer of command briefing.** It is vital that important information does not get lost.

Topic

Activity



Visual 7.9

Activity: Challenges and Strategies**Instructions:**

- Working as a team, identify the challenges facing an incoming commander and strategies for overcoming these challenges.
- Record your challenges and strategies on chart paper as shown:
- Choose a spokesperson and be ready to present in 15 minutes.

Transfer of Command	
Challenges	Strategies

Unit 7:
Transfer of Command

Visual 7.9

Visual Description: Challenges and Strategies Activity**Instructor Notes**

Present the following instructions to the participants:

1. Working as a team, identify the challenges facing an incoming commander and strategies for overcoming these challenges.
2. Record your challenges and strategies on chart paper in two columns (one labeled "Challenges" and the second labeled "Strategies").
3. Choose a spokesperson to present your challenges and strategies to the class. Be ready to present your list in 15 minutes.

Monitor the time. After 15 minutes, call time.

Conduct the activity discussion as follows:

1. Ask each spokesperson to present the team's list of information.
2. Compare the similarities and differences among the lists.
3. Summarize the main learning points from this activity.



Visual 7.10

Summary

Are you now able to:

- Describe the process of transfer of command?
- List the essential elements of information involved in transfer of command?



Unit 7:
Transfer of Command

Visual 7.10

Visual Description: Summary

Instructor Notes

Ask the participants if they are now able to:

- Describe the process of transfer of command.
- List the essential elements of information involved in transfer of command.
 - Situation status.
 - Incident objectives and priorities based on the IAP.
 - Current organization.
 - Resource assignments.
 - Resources ordered and en route.
 - Incident facilities.
 - Incident communications plan.
 - Incident prognosis, concerns, and other issues.
 - Introduction of Command and General Staff members.

Next, ask the participants if they have any questions about the content presented in this unit.

Answer any questions. Then explain that the next unit is the Course Summary.

Your Notes